When Half Gods Go

And Other Poems

Norah M. Holland

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WHEN HALF GODS GO
AND OTHER POEMS

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WHEN HALF GODS GO
AND OTHER POEMS

BY

NORAH M. HOLLAND

"Heartily know,
When half gods go
The Gods arrive."

—EMERSON.

New York
THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
1924

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WHEN HALF GODS GO
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WHEN HALF GODS GO

A Mystery Play

SCENE I

A glade in Olympus. In the foreground stands Apollo, leaning against a tree, holding in his hand a lyre with broken strings. At his feet Diana lies, her empty quiver and broken bow at her side. Pallas sits watching them while Pan, a little in the background, is piping to Dryads and Fauns, who are dancing. The dance, swift at first, grows slower and more mournful.

DRYADS (*Sing*)

O we are weary of dancing and singing,
  Weary of sunshine and rain;
Ne'er shall the glades of Olympus be ringing
  With our glad laughter again.

Never again shall we dance with the shadows,
  Echo shall call us in vain;
Vainly green woodlands and bird-haunted meadows
  Dream of our coming again.

First Dryad (*Leans her cheek against a tree*)

O tree of mine, how often have I lain
Beneath your boughs in sunshine and in rain;
Now you shall never shield my head again.

Second Dryad

O pleasant meadows, when the dewy dawn
Shall touch with misty gold the upland lawn,
Will you remember us when we are gone?

Third Dryad

Farewell! Farewell! New gods shall take our place,
Within our shrines new altar fires shall blaze,
Our feet no more shall walk familiar ways.

Yet, O fair fields where we were wont to dwell,
Bird-haunted woods, dear and desirable,
Forget not quite those who have loved you well.

(*They go out slowly and lingeringly, looking back sorrowfully as they go.*)

Apollo

The fire upon our altars dies away
And men forget us, who once held us dear.
Even thy fauns and dryads, O Pan, have fled.

Pan (*Rising and coming forward*)

Yet still my faithful shepherds own my sway,
Still do they share with me their humble cheer;
Still in my shrine they set the milk and bread

And amber-dropping honey, clear and sweet;
And country wine, in carven bowls, they bring.

DIANA

No more do my white maidens dance, to greet
Me, in the woods, beside my holy spring.
Thy helm no more, O Pallas, burning bright,
Shall lead thine Athens on to victory,
Nor Aphrodite's shoulder, rosy white,
Break the long swell of the Sicilian sea.

APOLLO

Men have forgotten us.

PALLAS

Our work is done;
We, the half-gods, sent here to lead men on
To find the God behind the gods.

DIANA

But we,—
Must we, then, lose our worship?

PAN (*Uneasily*)

It may be
Ye have asked too much of them; but I, who am wise,
Crave of my folk no lordly sacrifice
To smoke upon mine altar. I would share
Their little joys and griefs, their country fare—
A loaf, a bowl of wine, a home-made cheese

Wrapped in a vine-leaf—and I give increase
To their flocks and herds, and to their hearths bring peace.

APOLLO

And yet, O Pan, even *thy* votaries
Grow less content and stint their sacrifice.
The loaf grows small; the bowl that once brimmed o'er
With fragrant purple, brims for thee no more;
No tender kid, ere yet his horns are grown,
Yields, for thy sake, his life upon thy stone.

PAN (*Shrugs his shoulders*)

So that the loaf and honey still they give
I care not, I, although the kid shall live
To skip about the forest paths and browse
Full many a day upon the youngling boughs.
But is our worship doomed to pass away?
Who then replaces us? Wise Pallas, say.

DIANA

Aye; whence shall come this God Who is to be?
And how?

PALLAS

Not with the trump of victory,
Nor robed in glory, as *we* came to men.
But in their flesh, and bowed beneath the load
Of their infirmities, He comes.

APOLLO (*Scornfully*)

And when
Shall He o'ercome us—this new, beggar God?

PALLAS

Lo! Turn ye to the Eastern skies tonight,
And ye shall see a new star burning bright.
Follow, and it shall lead you where He lies,
A Babe in His mother's arms.

PAN

His star doth rise
Even as the fire upon our altar dies.

DIANA

Ah me, my old-time worship! Ah, the beat
Of cymbals, and the white nymphs' flying feet,
And the clear voices chanting! Overthrown
Mine altar now; my courts with grass o'ergrown;
My music ended and my maidens gone!

APOLLO

Ah, sister, sister! This new God to be
Who comes in weakness and humility,
Yet still has power to thrust us from our seat,
Must we then lay our worship at His feet?
Shall *my* sun rise for Him with brighter ray—
Thy stars and silver moon His word obey?
Come then, and let us seek Him out and see
This God made man, this new divinity,
This Babe who steals our worship.

PALLAS

Nay, not so;
But He Who is the Lord of gods and men
Has come among us. Shall we not yield Him then
His own that He has lent?

APOLLO

Come, let us go!

(*Exeunt omnes.*) Curtain falling as they go.

SCENE II

The hills outside Bethlehem. Felix and Hob, two shepherds, seated at a fire. To them enter Mac, a much older shepherd.

MAC

Be the sheep folded safe?

HOB

Aye; safe and fast
This hour agone.

FELIX

The nights be growing chill,
And the sheep come early home.

MAC

The summer's past,
As my old bones do know. Ye be young, lads, still.
And the blood flows quick within you. When you grow

As old as I, the current runs but slow,
And the frost bites.

HOB

Sit by our fire here
Awhile and warm you, Mac, and share our cheer.
(*Shepherds eat and drink.*)

FELIX

How bright the new star shines tonight among
Her silver sisters!

HOB

Seven nights since, it swung
Above the shoulder of the hill. Its light
Shines on us now from heaven's topmost height.

MAC

An evil portent!

FELIX

Gods forefend it! Nay,
The evil planets burn with redder ray;
And naught of harm has touched us since it stood
In golden glory, there above the wood.

HOB

The sheep have thrived full well since first it shone;
No prowling wolves have harmed them, and the lambs
Wax strong, in peace and safety, with their dams.

MAC

Come, Felix, sing a stave. The night draws on.

FELIX (*Sings*)

Great Zeus, upon Olympus' top,
  May live and lie at ease;
But we be simple shepherd folk
  From humble villages;
And best we love the little gods
  That walk among the trees.

Apollo, with his shining bow,
  Is Lord of Sun and Air;
But we be simple shepherd folk
  Who know both toil and care;
And best we love the little gods
  Our humble lot who share.

Tall Dian, with her maidens white
  Walks lonely on the steep;
But we be simple shepherd folk
  A-guarding of our sheep:
And best we love the little gods
  Who laugh and love and weep.

MAC

Aye, aye, the gods! They laugh and lie at ease,
Little or great, nor heed our agonies.

HOB (*Laughs*)

The gods are dead.

FELIX (*Gazing into the fire*)

Yet have I dreamed of one,
A new God, greater than the moon or sun,
Or Zeus or Pallas, Who should set aside
His Godhead, laying down His Power and pride
For our sakes, and on earth our lot should share,
Live as we live, our toils and sorrows bear,
Because He loved us and would have us know
His love. 'Twas so I dreamed.

MAC

Could it be so
That were a God to worship.

HOB

Very chill
The night. Make up the fire.

(*Puts more fuel on fire.*)

FELIX

The new star still
Shines o'er the fold.

MAC

The day draws swiftly on.
See, the East reddens with the rising sun
And the dawn-wind blows.

HOB

Hush! What is that?

(*Angel appears. Shepherds spring to their feet in alarm.*)

HOB

Be ye
A god or man? A friend or enemy?

ANGEL

Hail, shepherds! Unto you I bring this night
Glad tidings of great joy. A Child, the Light
Of all the world, to you this hour is born—
The Lord, your God. Go, seek Him out with morn.
Lo! You shall find Him lying in a stall,
Who is your Saviour and the Lord of all.

CHORUS OF ANGELS (*sing*)

Gloria in excelsis Deo!
Glory be to God on high;
Unto you a Son is born, and
Unto you a Child is given.

Hill to laughing hill re-echoes,
Vale to vale makes glad reply,—
Unto earth has God descended
From the highest heaven.

(*Angel fades away. Shepherds stand listening with hands to ears.*)

MAC

Be we awake or dreaming, lads?

FELIX

I heard
A rustling like the pinions of a bird
Above us. I looked up and one stood there,
The starlight on his wings and floating hair;
And then—and then—a splendour like the voice
Of some great anthem that still cried, "Rejoice!
The Word-made-Flesh is with you here tonight."
Heard ye it too?

HOB

We saw a burst of light
And heard a singing.

MAC

Merrily it rang,
The chorus that he and his fellows sang.
How went it, say you?

FELIX

That a God is born
In Bethlehem today.

HOB (*Looking at sky.*)

'Tis nearing morn;
Come, let us go and seek Him.

MAC

Gods be fain
Of gifts, and we have none.

FELIX

Poor men and plain
We be; yet I to Him a lamb will take—
A firstling of the flock.

HOB

And I will make
A ball for Him, that He therewith may play.

MAC

Come, let us hasten! Soon it will be day.
How shall we find Him?

FELIX

The star leads the way.

(*Exeunt omnes.*)

SCENE III

The Stable at Bethlehem. Mary singing to the Christ-Child on her knee. Joseph stands at a little distance watching them.

MARY (*Sings*)

Sleep, Baby Jesukin,
Rosy and small,
What though Thy birth-place
Be only a stall?
What though Thy cradle
A manger shall be?
Sleep, while Thy mother
Is watching o'er Thee.

Sleep, Baby Jesukin,
  Dimpled feet pressed
Close to the shelter and
  Warmth of my breast;
Small, straying fingers
  My heart that enfold;
Rest, darling head
  With its ringlets of gold.

Sleep, Baby Jesukin,
  Stars at Thy birth
Hailed Thee as Monarch and
  Saviour of earth.
Hard is that path to tread,
  Weary that way;
Sleep, Baby Jesukin,
  Sleep while you may.

(*Joseph goes to door and looks out, shading his eyes with his hand.*)

MARY

What see you, Joseph?

JOSEPH (*Pointing outside*)

Where the hills arise
Distant and dim, through darkness to the skies,
I see the pulsing of a wondrous light.

MARY

'Tis the dawn, touching Hermon's topmost height,
Turning his snows to fire.

JOSEPH

No dawn that springs
Over the edge of the world on rainbow wings
Comes with such radiance. The whole dome of air
Flames into glory. Not one-half so fair
Is the great temple at Jerusalem
When the lights blaze and all the people sing,
And every jewel in the garment's hem
Of the High Priest gleams fire. Ah, the swing
Of the golden censers, scattering sweetness through
The throng!

MARY (*Murmuring*)

No golden censers swing for You,
O Jesukin; no multitude shall greet
Your coming. In the manger low You lie,
With ass and oxen standing meekly by;
And I, Your mother, kneeling at Your feet
Alone to worship You.

JOSEPH

A voice I hear,
And footsteps through the darkness drawing near.
Who comes so late?

(*Enter shepherds.*)

HOB

Where is the Babe Who is born
To be our King upon this Christmas morn?

JOSEPH (*Salaaming to shepherds*)

A poor man, I, having no store of gold;
I pray you do not harm us, sirs. Behold,
My wife and child in this bare stable lie,
The inn being full. Nothing of kings know I,
Who am but a carpenter.

FELIX

No robbers we,
But simple shepherds. On the mountain-steep
Last night we watched, guarding from harm our sheep,
And sat around our fire, when suddenly
A light broke round us, and beside us there
Stood a great Angel, silver-winged and fair.
"Follow the star," he said, "and ye shall find
The God-made-man, the Saviour of mankind,
A Baby, lying in a manger bare,
At Bethlehem, in a poor stable there."
He spoke and vanished; but a host there drifted
Across the sky, on pinions all aflame,
Of Cherubim and Seraphim, who lifted
Their jubilant voices, crying forth the Name
Of the new-born Saviour. And they sang again
Of peace on earth and of good-will to men.

MAC

All the whole air was full of carolling—
A merry chorus! Sweetly did they sing.

HOB

"Follow the star," they sang; and lo! it fled
Adown the skies. We followed where it led
Until it stood above the stable here.
But where is He That is born?

MARY

Shepherds, draw near!
Behold my Son, within the manger laid,
Who was born of me this night. Be not afraid.

(*Shepherds kneel and worship the Child.*)

FELIX

Hail, little Lord of heaven and earth and sea!
A firstling of the flock I offer Thee,
Bringing Thee here a lamb for Thy delight,
A tender playmate, soft and fleecy white.

HOB

Darling, put forth Thine hand and take, I pray,
This ball I made, that Thou with it mightst play.

MAC

No toys have I to give, being poor and old,
Yet take my cloak to shield Thee from the cold.

MARY

My Son would thank you, sirs, if He could speak,
But He is still a Babe, helpless and weak;
His little Lips no words have learned to say.

HOB

See, the dawn brightens. We must haste away.
The flocks await our coming.

MAC

Grant there be
No harm befall them! Come, lads, follow me.

(*Exit shepherds, Joseph following them out. In the semi-dark background of the stable gigantic shadows appear and misty forms emerge, gradually becoming more distinct, and the gods come forward and surround the Child.*)

APOLLO (*Incredulously*)

So *this* is He Who has usurped our seat?
This the great God Who takes His place on high
Above us?

DIANA

Can those dimpled hands and sweet
Grasp the dread sceptre of Divinity?
Will that small brow not ache beneath the load
That Deity must bear? Poor Baby God!

PAN (*Comes forward alone and kneels before the Christ.*)

Lord, it is goat-foot Pan who kneels to Thee.
I am the guardian of all woodland things
Furry and small; the squirrels come to me
Seeking their food; I teach the wild bird wings
The ways to follow on their journeyings,

And comfort all hurt creatures; and with rude
Sound of my piping cheer their solitude.
O God-made-man, I cannot come like Thee
With help and healing for all things that be;
I have no solacing for man's distress,
No cleansing water for his bitterness.
The least of all the little gods am I,
Yet take my worship, O Thou God most high.

DIANA

Son of a maiden, I, a maiden, come
From those fair Grecian hills that are my home,
Where through the aisles of forest, dim and sweet,
I follow the fleet deer with flying feet,
Or, with my laughing nymphs, bathe in the cool
Reed-guarded waters of some crystal pool.
And I have left my woods and dimpling fountains,
My lordly stags unhindered now may roam;
My feet no more shall tread the old-time mountains
And dear, familiar valleys of my home.
The silver echoes of my horn shall make
Music no more beside the dreaming lake;
For lo! my quiver at Thy feet I lay
And my sharp arrows.

APOLLO (*Kneeling*)

I, the god of day,
Lord of the burning sun, whose fiery heat
Brings life to all things, yield Thee now my seat,
O mightier Lord than I; here laying down
Before Thee, wondrous Babe, my laurel crown.

PALLAS (*Kneeling*)

O Word-made-flesh, Eternal Wisdom, gleaming
Across the dark and stormy skies of earth,
While through the centuries prophets in their dreaming
Have hailed the promise of Thy mystic birth;
Thou, Who didst send us, the half-gods, before Thee
Some faint foreshadowing of Thy Life to be,
That so the hearts of men might own Thy glory,
O Child divine, the old gods worship Thee.
Lo! here our service at Thy feet we lay,
Day-star, Whose brightness pales our waning ray!

(*Music is heard outside. Shepherds pass the door singing.*)

SHEPHERDS (*sing*)

We be simple shepherds,
Men of no renown,
Guarding well our sheep-folds,
Near to Bethlehem town.
Baby Jesus, keep us all,
Cot and sheepfold, bower and stall.

Wild the wind was blowing,
Sudden all was still,
Laughter soft of angels
Rang from hill to hill.
Baby Jesus, Thou wast born
Ere the midnight paled to morn.

ANGEL CHORUS (*Outside*)

Gloria in excelsis Deo! Glory be to God on high!
Unto us a Son is born, and unto us a Child is given;
Hill to laughing hill re-echoes, vale to vale makes glad reply,
Lo! to earth has God descended from the highest heaven.

PAN

Our worship passes, and with morning light
O Sun of suns! Thy day arises bright.

APOLLO

Deep in the ancient night our place will be.

PALLAS

Yet ours it was to lead men on to Thee.

(*The old gods, with faces and hands uplifted, break into singing.*)

THE GODS (*sing*)

In the east the skies are clearing
Where the promised day is born;
Dim *our* light and disappearing,
Thine the splendour of the morn.
We, the old gods, sent before Thee,
Shadows of Thy Deity,

Adoration, praise and glory,
Lord, we render unto Thee.

(*They rise and pass slowly out. Mary bends above the child. Music of the Angels' chorus sounds faintly outside. Curtain falls.*)

THE END

THE AWAKENING OF THE LILY

A Fairy Phantasy

SCENE I

A simple woodland scene, with bank in centre back, a mound left forward, a stump right forward. Space for dancing centre forward. On bank, centre back, three snowflakes are curled, sleeping. On mound, two more, and at foot of stump one is curled up alone. During first four bars of music they do not stir. As melody progresses they wake, stretch and begin to whirl round, slowly at first, then faster. After dance they quiet down and form a semicircle as they sing.

SNOWFLAKES (*sing*)

Now our work is nearly over,
  Spring comes dancing down the lane,
Bringing with her scent of clover,
  Song of robin, drip of rain;
Sister Snowdrop comes again,
  Warning us to northward fly,
Though to linger we are fain—
  Goodbye, goodbye.

All the long, dark days we've guarded
Every little leaf and flower,
Kept them safely hidden, warded
From old Mother Winter's power.
Now at last has come the hour
When the sun *his* spells must try,
Laughing through each April shower—
Goodbye, goodbye.

Mother Winter, old and evil,
Mother Winter, dour and grey,
With her touch each bud would shrivel,
But we covered them away.
Warm and safe and deep they lay;
Now they're stirring restlessly;
Soon shall Spring resume her sway—
Goodbye, goodbye.

At end of song melody of first verse is repeated and snowflakes dance a more formal dance. The dancing and movements are confined to the pantomimic and instrumental parts of music. During words of songs snowflakes and fairies are not as active in their movements. At end of dance Sneeflocken, Starflake and Frostflower stay centre. Others come down stage to foolights.

SNEEFLOCKEN

I have not seen the old witch all day long.

STARFLAKE

An hour ago I heard her wicked tongue
Mumbling and muttering curses deep and low
Because 'twas almost time for her to go.

FROSTFLOWER

She goes, but we must follow in her train
Ere down the hillside comes the Spring again.
I wish that we might linger till the trees
Put on their gay green dresses.

SNEEFLOCKEN

And the bees
Tune all their pipes in fields of clover-bloom,
Or where the violets spill their sweet perfume
And butterflies dance merrily.

STARFLAKE

But we
Far, far away shall hold our revelry,
And, through the long hours of the Arctic nights,
Dance with the North-Winds and the Northern
Lights.

FROSTFLOWER

And, while the Waggoner his watch shall keep
O'er the white stretches of the frozen deep,
Shall whisper to the winds a tale of green
Rush-girdled pools, where fairies lie serene

On the great water-lily leaves that float
Upon their surface, listening to the note
Of some shy bird, that in the branches swings.

STARFLAKE

Until in those wild breasts a warmth there springs
And cold eyes soften, as they dream awhile,
'Mid the eternal frosts, of Summer's smile.

SNEEFLOCKEN

Hush! I hear Winter's footsteps drawing near;
Jack Frost is with her. Let us hide from her.

(*Snowflakes all run back to bank and hide, forming snowbank.*)

WINTER

What! No-one here? Well, well, upon my word,
'Tis but a little minute since I heard
Those scatterbrains, the snowflakes, chattering
As is their wont, all tongues together clattering.
A noisy crew! And now they all are gone.

JACK FROST

So much the better. Hussies, every one!
Oft have they marred our toil, old mother, hid
The tender buds we would have nipped and killed.
Their fingers oft would spoil the work we did,
Warming to life again the flowers we chilled.

WINTER (*testily*)

My curse be on them, and on Spring, our foe!

JACK FROST

Hush, Mother! Let me whisper in your ear;
Now is the time to deal her a last blow,
Here in her fortress, ere we disappear.

(*Whispers.*)

WINTER

Why, that's my clever son! Let's go prepare
Our vengeance. 'Tis a hopeful scheme, I'll swear.

(*Exit Winter and Jack Frost, left forward on line of footlights, keeping time to music. Music changes to Snowflake music, and snowflakes whirl out from hiding singly, Sneeflocken, Starflake and Frostflower ending their dance at footlights.*)

STARFLAKE

What mischief is the old witch hatching now?

SNEEFLOCKEN

She and her son are a sweet pair, I vow.
We'll keep a watch upon them, and undo,
So far as in us lies, their scheming, too.

STARFLAKE

Spring should be warned.

FROSTFLOWER

Let us tell Oberon, then,
To let her know Jack Frost is luring near,
Hoping to nip her, ere he disappear.

(*Enter LITTLE DAISY forward left, and runs to snowflakes, who draw back a little, forming semi-circle watching him.*)

LITTLE DAISY

O, please, are you the fairies of the glen?

FROSTFLOWER

Why, child, how came you here? No fairies we,
Only the snowflakes.

LITTLE DAISY

They said I should see
Queen Spring and all her courtiers here. So small
Am I, I've never seen the Spring at all.
But oh, I am so tired. I've walked *so* far
From the big field where all my brothers are,
And now she has not come, and they will be
So angry with me, when they follow me.

(*Begins to cry.*)

SNOWFLAKES

Poor little lad!

STARFLAKE

Sit down and rest, my dear.
Here's Oberon coming. Spring will soon be here.

(*OBERON enters, forward left, and ROBIN GOODFELLOW forward right, and meet in centre.*)

OBERON

Now are the rough blasts of the winter o'er,
The south wind sings through all the land once more.

(*Calls.*)

Ho! Robin Goodfellow! Robin, I say.

ROBIN

What would you with me?

OBERON

Blow your horn, I pray,
And call my flowers and my fairies here
To make all trace of winter disappear.
Spring needs must find a carpet for her feet,
When she shall come, of blossoms fair and sweet.

ROBIN

They're close at hand, and when my horn I blow
They'll be with us ere forty seconds go.

(*Snowflakes at end of Oberon's speech come out and gradually approach, forward centre. Robin turns and sees them.*)

ROBIN

What do you here? I thought you vanished quite,
My playfellows of many a wintry night.

OBERON (*Sees them*)

Truants, why do you linger? Disappear.
What would Spring say if she should find you here?

SNEEFLOCKEN

No, no, indeed, we need not go just yet.

STARFLAKE

We worked so very hard all winter long
Covering the buds, for fear that they should get
Bitten by old Wolf Frost.

FROSTFLOWER

But now they're strong
And Winter's packing up to go. But we
Are tired of working. Let us dance. We'll be
So very, very good. Of course we know
When Sister Snowdrop comes, we needs must go.

(*SNOWDROP enters, forward left, and snowflakes draw away, leaving her centre.*)

SNOWDROP

Did someone call?

OBERON

Here's Snowdrop now. Away!
Scamper, you rogues, you must no longer stay.

SNEEFLOCKEN (*To Snowdrop*)

Why did you come so soon? Now we must flee.
Goodbye, dear Snowdrop. Sisters, follow me.

(*Sings.*)

We must leave the pleasant places,
Leave our laughter and our play,
Turning to the desert spaces
Where the wild North Wind holds sway.
Sisters, sisters, come away,
Northward, northward we must fly.
Snowdrop, dear, we cannot stay,—
Goodbye, goodbye.

(*Snowflakes have whirling dance and exit left.*)

SNOWDROP (*calls after them*)

Goodbye, dear sisters. Soon I too must go;
Yet here I'll wait, till brighter blossoms blow.

ROBIN

Farewell, you rogues! Yet soon again we'll meet,
And frolic through the woods with flying feet,
Or whirl among the brown leaves on the hill
While the north wind is piping loud and shrill.

OBERON

A madcap rout! Yet they are kindly too.
Come, Robin, blow your horn. There's much to do.

ROBIN (*Blows his horn and sings*)

Elves of forest and of brake,
Hill and hollow, stream and lake,
Leave your rivers and their sedges,
Leave bare woods and leafless hedges;
Nixies, pixies, one and all,
Flower and fairy, bird and bee,
Hear ye not your comrade's call?
Come, 'tis Robin calls to thee.

Leprechauns, your cobbling leave;
Ellemaidens, the web ye weave;
Gnome and goblin, elf and sprite,
There is work for all tonight.
Dryads, leave your oak-trees' shade,
Water nymphs, your crystal halls;
Fauns, forsake your ferny glade;
Answer all, when Robin calls.

(*During song OBERON stands to right and ROBIN centre. In music following song, ROBIN skips to stump right, and Oberon goes centre back. Water Fairies enter right and land fairies left, forming a semicircle, OBERON centre.*)

WATER FAIRY

We have left our whispering reeds
Where the lazy salmon feeds,
Left our scented fleur-de-lys,
And our purple irises,
Banks of blue forgetmenot,

And each beryl-paven grot
Where the water ripples on;
What wouldst with us, Oberon?

LAND FAIRY

We be fays of English birth,
Sprung from her most holy earth,
From her immemorial trees,
From her leafy coppices;
Loving, with a love profound,
Every inch of English ground.
We have heard thy summons swell,
Robin, through each leafy dell,
And have hastened at that call
From our woods and waters all.
Lo! we've gathered, every one,
What wouldst with us, Oberon?

OBERON

I would have you weave a spell,
Weave it strongly, weave it well,
That when Spring shall come, she'll find
Here a place that's to her mind.
Dryads, lend your dappled shade,
Elves, bejewel all the glade
With your flowers, bright and fair;
Water fairies, fill the air
With a murmurous sound and low,
Like a river in its flow.

ROBIN

Link hands and dance, about, about!
So shall we speed the winter out.

(*Elves dance out, land fairies forward left, water fairies forward right. Flowers enter, some back right, some back left. Snowdrop joins Daffodil as flowers enter. Daisy wakes and sits up watching them.*)

DAFFODIL

How blue and bright the sky is. Do you hear
How the stream bubbles through the rushes near?
And, Violet, see! the grass is green once more.

VIOLET

And here's the hiding-place I knew of yore
Beneath the hawthorn tree, where all the day
I'd sit and see the other flowers at play.

POPPY

You are too timid. Why can you not stay
Here, with the rest of us, dance and be gay?

VIOLET

I never could! So many eyes to see!
No, no; my corner's good enough for me.

LILY

Dear Violet, when the grasshopper shall lead
His minstrel chorus back across the mead
To welcome Spring, will you not dance with me?

VIOLET

It will be sweet to hear his melody
Ring out once more with laughing notes and clear,
To herald Spring and bid her welcome here;
But I would rather listen to his song
Here in my corner, hidden from the throng.
I cannot frolic like the rest, you see,
And Poppy and the others laugh at me.

LILY

It shall be as you will, dear. Never mind;
For Poppy does not mean to be unkind.
She loves to laugh and dance and make a stir,
And thinks that all the world must be like her.

BIG DAISY

We will dance with you, Poppy, if you will,
But wait till Spring shall come across the hill.

LITTLE DAISY (*Running forward*)

O brothers dear, I am so glad you've come!
It seems so long since I was safe at home,
And I have travelled—oh, so far!—and seen
So *many* things, but not the Fairy Queen.

BIG DAISY

You naughty child! We've hunted far and wide
To find you. Say, why did you leave our side?

LITTLE DAISY

I wanted so to see the Queen, and then—

ROSE (*Laughing*)

Don't scold him, Daisy, he'll not do it again.

LILY

Keep with your brothers, dear. (*To others*)
And then, you know,
'Tis a brave lad that would adventure so.
But hark! I hear a silver trumpet blow!

(*A flourish of trumpets. Enter Frogs. Flowers form semicircle as they are heard. Three frogs enter left back and three right back, reaching centre of stage by long hop between flowers. Frogs stand during song, but take frog positions to dance.*)

FROGS (*Sing*)

We are Springtime's heralds gay,
See our coats of gold and green,
And our throats of whitest sheen,
Hear us chant our roundelay.

Laughing, dancing, fresh and fair,
Springtime came with odours sweet,
Crocus-flame beneath her feet,
Pussy-willows in her hair.

Frogs, Oh frogs, my heralds, go
  Unto all my folk, said she,
Great and small they wait for me;
  Blow your silver trumpets, blow.

So we come. O chant her praise;
  All our throats ring out the song;
Hear the notes roll rich and strong—
  Spring is coming down the ways.

(*Blow trumpets and exit on all fours, three right and three left forward. Spring enters back and takes centre. Oberon bows and leads her forward centre.*)

OBERON

Greeting, fair sister. All your Court attend
To bid you welcome. See how many a friend
Has come in haste to join your revelry.

LILY

Welcome, thrice welcome to your Majesty.

ROSE

And long and fair your days of sovranty.

SPRING

Greetings and thanks to you, my friends. The reign
Of Winter now is past, and Spring again
Calls you to revel.

POPPY

Long the months have been,
Madam, that we have waited for our Queen.
Now you are here, and all your friends rejoice.

DAFFODIL

From every copse the blackbird lifts his voice
To welcome you.

ROBIN

Bird, butterfly and bee
Are hastening to your presence from all lands.

BIG DAISY

And beetles come, in all their panoply,
And Wasp is marshalling his soldier bands;
Cricket and grasshopper at your commands
Will soon be here.

SPRING

Then let the dance begin.
Sound, pipe and sackbut, flute and violin.
Grasshopper, cricket, call the minstrels in.

(*Enter Grasshopper.*)

GRASSHOPPER

Hail, Queen! Your minstrel comes again from those
Enchanted lands where sunshine ever glows,
Where snows fall never and no hailstones beat,

Yet I have sought in vain for flowers there
As bright as Rose, or as the Lily fair,
Or Daffodil, or Violet shy and sweet. (*To flowers*)

VIOLET (*To Lily*)

Oh, he has thought of me while far away!
You heard him say it. He has thought of me!

SPRING

Right gladly do we greet you. Whither stray
Your fellow minstrels?

GRASSHOPPER

Cricket came with me
And thrush and blackbird are upon the way.

LILY

Now welcome home, our poet. Rose and I
Have missed you sorely, and, though Violet's shy
And can't find words, she bids you welcome too.

VIOLET

Dear Grasshopper, indeed, indeed I do.

GRASSHOPPER (*Raises Violet's hand to his lips*)

Thanks, Violet. Whatever chanced I knew,
Though all should fail me, you would still be true.

(*Enter Bee.*)

POPPY

Welcome, old Sobersides; you're late, you know,
To greet our Queen. She came an hour ago.

BEE

I have been seeking her all day. At last
The Blackbird came and said that she had passed
This way along the lane. Your Majesty (*to Spring*)
I am no Courtier, just a working-bee,
With all my heart I welcome you again,
Hoping that long and sunny be your reign.

SPRING

We thank you, Bee. Now, let the music play,
And all, with merry hearts, make holiday.

LILY

I am so glad you've come again, dear Bee;
Forget your work and dance awhile with me.

BEE

I fear that I can dance but heavily.

(*Music and dance. Winter laughs outside.*)

WINTER (*Outside*)

Softly, tread softly, lest our step they hear!
Little Spring dreams that we are lurking near.

SPRING

Hark! What was that?

(*Exit Spring and Oberon.*)

SNOWDROP

'Twas Winter's voice, I know.

DAFFODIL

I thought she had gone north long, long ago.

(*Exit Snowdrop and Daffodil.*)

BEE

Nay, surely she is gone. She would not dare
To linger here.

ROSE

'Twere best to have a care;
She's full of malice, and if she could deal
One stroke before she went to make us feel
Her power, she would not spare to strike the blow.

LILY

Why should she hate our gentle mistress so?

ROBIN

She's old and crabbed. Spring is young and fair,
With laughing eyes and blossoms in her hair
So Winter hates her.

POPPY

Let us run and see
If we can find her. If she's prowling near
We'll pack her howling off.

(*Exit Poppy, Violet, Grasshopper and Bee.*)

LITTLE DAISY

But then, if she
Is really a witch, her spells may be
Too strong for us.

ROSE

What? Trembling, child? Don't fear.
She shall not hurt you.

(*Exit Rose and Robin.*)

BIG DAISY

Not while *we* are near.

(*Exit Daisies, right.*)

FLOWERS (*Calling outside*)

Is she here?
There's no one near?

BEE

Does she lurk within the dell?

GRASSHOPPER

No-one here.

ALL

'Tis well, 'tis well.

LILY (*Calls after them*)

I'll wait for you until you come again.

(*Sits on Bank.*)

I'm glad that Spring is here and Winter's reign
Is over. Oh, I thought she'd never go;
And I had grown so tired of ice and snow.
(*Sleepily*) I'm tired still. (*Winter's music is heard.*)
I'll lie upon this mound
Until the others come. (*Sleeps*)

(*Enter Jack Frost and Winter, forward right.*)

WINTER

Is this the ground
That Spring has chosen for her revelry?

JACK FROST

This is the place.

WINTER

She reckoned not with us.
Haste to our vengeance lest they come ere we
Have left the glade desert and ruinous.
Touch with your fingers, son, and turn to blight
And death all things that now know life and light.

JACK FROST (*Sees Lily*)

Stay, who is here?

WINTER

One of Spring's maidens, she.
Now shall our vengeance strike right heavily.

JACK FROST

Hush! Wake her not till we have laid our spell
Upon her.

WINTER

She sleeps soundly. All is well.

(*Dance and Chant.*)

In our magic spell we wind her,
With our icy touches bind her;
Touch her hands, her heart, her brow,
Seal her eyes to slumber now.
Naught shall rouse her from her sleeping,
Naught shall wake her heart to leaping
Till a lover's arms enfold her,
Till a lover's eyes behold her;
And his kiss so warm shall lie
On cold hands and brow and eye
That our icy spell shall be
Melted from her utterly.
Until then, though comrades weep,
Long and chill shall be her sleep.

WINTER

Ha-ha-ha-ha! Now will they feel our power,
These foes of ours.

JACK FROST

I hate them, every flower,
And fain would have them all lie as she lies.

WINTER

Well, we must northward flee. Ere she arise
Many a day will pass.

JACK FROST

Yet she is fair,
And must have loves a-plenty.

WINTER

But to break
The icy spell, it must be that they dare
And sacrifice and suffer for her sake.
No light love's fires shall melt away the chill
That holds that slumber heavy on her still.

JACK FROST

Listen! The others come again, and we
Must fly before them.

WINTER

Come, then; follow me.

(*Exit forward left. Enter Flowers laughing and talking.*)

ROSE

No trace of Winter there within the dell.

DAFFODIL

No footsteps of her by the river-side.

SNOWDROP

Yet 'twas her laugh we heard. I know it well.

BIG DAISY

Well, we have hunted for her far and wide
And found no trace of her.

ROSE

Where's Lily? She
Did not come with us.

POPPY

Underneath that tree.
She said she'd wait till we returned. We'll creep
Softly and wake her.

(*Flowers creep gaily back stage and surround Lily.*)

She is sound asleep.

ROSE

Lily, dear.

DAFFODIL

She does not wake.

DAISY

Oh, how cold and still she lies.

VIOLET

Lily, darling.

POPPY

Rise, and shake
All the slumber from your eyes.

SNOWDROP

No, our words are all in vain,
Still she lies, and hears not one.

VIOLET

Will she wake to life again?

DAFFODIL

Let us call to Oberon. (*Calls*)
Oberon, Oberon, lend your aid,
Lo! We all are sore afraid.

(*Enter Oberon and Robin, forward right.*)

OBERON

Did someone call me?

ROSE

Oberon, Oberon, see!

DAISY

She will not waken, so we cried to thee.

FLOWERS (*Sing*)

We have called her, "Lily, Lily,"
  We have kissed her hands and hair;
But she lies so white and chilly,
  She, of all the flowers most fair.

Is she dead, or is she sleeping?
  Will she wake to life again?
Sister, sister, we are weeping;
  Shall our sorrow be in vain?

Oberon, Oberon, who has wrought it?
  Bound her sweetness with this spell?
Whose the evil heart that thought it?—
  She whom all things loved so well.

We have called her, "Lily, Lily,"
  Kissed and kissed her yet again;
Still she lies so white and chilly—
  Shall our grief be all in vain?

OBERON

I see in this the trace of Winter's hand.

ROSE

We thought that she long since had left the land,
And never dreamed that she so bold would grow
As to invade the Court of Springtime so.

DAISY

Is there no way the icy spell to break?

OBERON

I know but one. If someone for her sake
All he holds dearest at her feet shall lay
Then shall his kisses melt the ice away.
Come, let us send our heralds far and wide
And spread the news through all the country-side,
That all who will may try the prize to gain
And woo the Lily back to life again.

ROBIN

Fear not! Full many love her. Butterfly,
Moth, Grasshopper and Bee their spells shall try;
And many a suitor from north, east, west, south,
Will haste to lay their kisses on her mouth.

(*Flowers begin to file out.*)

DAFFODIL (*Pausing*)

How shall we leave her lying there alone?

OBERON

Nay, o'er her head the friendly boughs shall bend,
And the shy forest fairies, everyone,
Her mossy couch attend.
And through the sunny hours bright dreams shall flit
Around her drowsy slumber, guarding it.

(*Flowers slowly file out, Oberon last, leaving Lily alone. Music of song repeated. Stage in darkness, save for spot of light on Lily.*)

SCENE II

Same setting as end of last scene. Flowers return to music and circle about bank, dancing and laughing. Daisy stops them.

DAISY

Hush! you'll wake her.

POPPY

Never fear;
She sleeps soundly, Daisy dear.

DAFFODIL

We may dance, she will not wake;
We may sing, she does not stir.

ROSE

Song or laughter cannot shake
Slumber from the eyes of her.

POPPY

Three days since she danced with us
Lightest foot in all the glen.

VIOLET

Now she lies in silence thus;
Will she ever dance again?

ROSE

Only love can break the charm
That has bound her in its chain,
Lover's kisses, soft and warm,
Call her back to life again.

DAFFODIL

O, here is Oberon.

(*Enter OBERON and ROBIN, forward Right.*)

Your Majesty,
We pray you tell us when once more we'll see
Lily dance with us, as she did of yore?

OBERON

Fear not; ere nightfall she will wake once more.

(*Music outside. Enter WASP, singing.*)

WASP

A strong arm and a trusty blade,
And the world wherein to roam,
O who would change a soldier's trade
To rust in peace at home?
Kling, kling,
The brave blows ring,
And the bugle calls us, Come.

A stout heart and a comrade true,
And a lass in every town,
And lusty lads to drink with you
The bitter ale and brown;

Quaff, quaff,
With jest and laugh,
As the foaming drink goes down.

O light loves they may come and go
As the sunshine follows rain,
And laughing eyes may overflow;
They weep for us in vain.
Sip, sip,
Each maiden's lip,
And we're off to fight again.

WASP (*To Poppy*)

Goodmorrow to you, Mistress Rosycheek,
If a poor soldier may but to you speak
I'd ask you why this gallant company
Is gathered here? Some feat of arms to see?
Or for some tournament? I pray you, tell.

POPPY

Nay, sir; it is to break the wicked spell
That left the Lily silent on her bier.
Listen, and soon our herald you will hear
Proclaim the news that all may strive to break
Old Winter's charm and bid the Lily wake.

OBERON

Robin, ring out the summons far and wide,
And call them in from all the country side.

(*Flowers stand around Lily. Oberon stands right.*)

ROBIN (*Sings*)

We cried, but she would not waken;
We called, but she has not stirred;
Her slumber is still unshaken
By revel or song or word.
The dryads their watch were keeping
Above her, and sang to her sleeping,
And the nixies went weeping, weeping;
Nor laughter nor grief has she heard.

O come then, with passion and power;
Come in from the north and the south,
From the east and the west and shower
Your kisses upon her mouth.
She lies here, calm and unmoving,
O, lovers, turn from your roving
And wake her to life and loving,
From the spell that has bound her youth.

(*ROBIN, after song, seats himself upon stump.*)

DAISY

O, who will come and wake her?

POPPY

Do not fear,
For she had many a lover.

ROSE

Far and near
The summons swells, and surely they will hear.

DAFFODIL

Even slow, plodding Bee to catch her smile
Would linger near, and cease his toil awhile.

VIOLET

And Grasshopper full many a song has made
In praise of her.

ROSE

And cricket through the glade
Has sung them shrilly all the summer night
Till the sun came and darkness took to flight.

ROBIN (*Calls*)

What ho! What ho! If ye would try your fate,
O lovers, hasten, lest ye come too late.

(*Wasp swaggers forward, bowing to Oberon.*)

WASP

If a poor soldier, Sire, may strive to win
The prize, the lists I fain would enter in.

OBERON

Why, sir, the venture all may try who care,
But most shall fail.

WASP

Well, that's the chance of war;
I'll try my luck.
(*Oberon draws aside, showing Lily.*)

So that's the maiden? She
Is a fair lass, but all too pale for me.
I like a rosy armful, plump and warm;
Still—(*Stoops and kisses Lily*)—if a soldier's kiss
can break the charm,
Rouse you my girl. (*Lily does not stir.*)
There's lasses that would be,
To win my kisses, fain to follow me
Around the world.

OBERON

You have failed. Let others try
How they shall fare. Give back, sir.

WASP

As you will;
There's many a lass that better takes my eye
Than this poor shadow, frozen, white and still.

(*Swaggers out, forward left.*)

FLOWERS (*Dance and sing*)

Cold and white and still she lies,
Folded hands and fast shut eyes.

Not *your* touch shall bid her leap
Flushed and laughing from her sleep.

Only true love's power shall stir
Life within the heart of her;

True love's kisses, close and warm,
Melt the ice and break the charm.

(*MOTH saunters languidly in, forward right, and stands watching the dance disapprovingly. When it ceases, he strolls forward and speaks to OBERON.*)

MOTH

Good morrow, Sire.

OBERON

Have you come to break
The icy spell, and bid the Lily wake?

ROBIN (*Scornfully*)

Not he, forsooth! No warmth *his* kisses hold,
Who loves the shadows more than sunlight's gold.

MOTH

First I would see the maiden, if you please;

(*Glances disdainfully at Flowers.*)

MOTH

I love not gaudy creatures, such as these;
My soul cries out for subtler harmonies.

(*A murmur of indignation from Flowers.*)

POPPY

Gaudy, indeed!

VIOLET

The softer tints *are* best.

DAFFODIL

Must we ask *him* ere we go gaily dressed?

OBERON

Yet Spring and Nature love bright tints.

MOTH

I know;
But Art to me doth deeper beauties show—
Not crude robustness, vulgar, gaudy, gay,
But languid, lovely colors of decay.
Yet I would see the maid, and note if she
Has aught of an artistic charm for me.
(*OBERON shows Lily.*)
She's fair in truth. How cold and pure her face!
Methinks that she should move with sinuous grace.
(*Kisses her languidly.*)
Lift up those heavy lids and see in me
A poor apostle of Art's purity.
Arouse thee, fair one. I have laid, in sooth,
The purple kiss of passion on thy mouth.
(*LILY does not move.*)
She does not stir!

OBERON

Not yours her heart to win.
Back, and let other suitors now come in.

(*Moth saunters languidly out, forward left.*)

GRASSHOPPER (*Enters, forward right, to music*)

Hail, Oberon! A wandering minstrel I,
Across the hills I come from Arcadie;
I long have loved the Lily, and am fain
To break from her old Winter's icy chain,
So, with your leave, I would the venture try.

VIOLET

How can she fail to answer to his voice?
Were he to call me, how should I rejoice!

OBERON

Hail, sir; the venture all may try who will.

ROSE

Many *have* tried; but Lily slumbers still.

GRASSHOPPER

If song may wake her, she shall go with me
And view the pleasant land of Arcadie.

DAFFODIL

Nay, nay, we cannot lose the Lily so.

POPPY

The Court of Spring were sad if she should go.

GRASSHOPPER

Yet go she must. Naught should the minstrel bind;
He must be free to travel with the wind.

(*Sings*)

Heart of my heart, the long road lies,
A streak of white across the down,
To where the hilltops touch the skies;
Then let us seek the mountain's crown,
And cross its summit, bare and brown,
Heart of my heart, O come with me
To walk the ways of Arcadie.

Heart of my heart, right merrily
The little winds of Springtime blow;
The air is full of melody,
The birds are singing, soft and low;
Heart of my heart, then let us go
Across the hills, and wander free
The pleasant paths of Arcadie.

Heart of my heart, if song may break
The frozen sleep that on you lies,
List to my singing. Wake, O wake,
And thrust that slumber from your eyes
While sunny still the April skies;
Heart of my heart, and roam with me
Across the hills in Arcadie.

(*He kisses her, she does not stir. During song flowers seat themselves, some by bank near Lily, others on mound forward. At end of song they*

rise and watch eagerly. Violet stands by mound, far enough away from him for him not to hear her.)

VIOLET

Surely, surely, she will hear.

ROSE

Not his singing, sweet and clear,
Breaks the spell that long has bound her.

DAFFODIL

Not for him shall she arise
With the lovelight in her eyes.

DAISY

Still she sleeps as when we found her.

(*Grasshopper goes slowly out, forward left, looking back sadly.*)

VIOLET (*Sighs*)

Ah, would he only sing that song to me,
Gladly I'd follow him to Arcadie.

(*BUTTERFLY and BEE enter, to butterfly music. Butterfly dances in, forward right, to ROSE, forward left, who receives him with smiles. Bee remains forward right.*)

BUTTERFLY

Ha, Rose, old friend! Say, have I come too late?
Has any kiss broken the icy spell?
Or does she still in that charmed slumber wait?

ROSE

Her sleep is yet unbroken.

BUTTERFLY

It is well.
(*To Oberon*) Is it permitted, Sire, to try my fate?

OBERON

Why, all who love her may the venture try.

BUTTERFLY

A universal lover, Sire, am I.
I love the saucy sweetness of the Rose,
The Violet shy, with modest-drooping head,
The Daffodil, in cloth of gold who goes,
And laughing Poppy, in her robes of red;
Dear little Daisy in her robes of white,
And Lily ever was my heart's delight.

OBERON (*Laughing*)

Too freely, sir, I fear your fondness flows;
She will not wake for kisses such as those.
Say, will you give, to drive her sleep away,
Out of your life one long, sweet summer day?

BUTTERFLY

Why, life is short, and summer days are rare,
And, if she wake not, others are as fair.

BEE (*Indignantly*)

There's ne'er another flower as sweet as she!

BUTTERFLY

Why, Rose or Daffodil will dance with me
As lightly, Poppy laugh as merrily.
Yet, if a kiss will do it, I am fain
To draw the Lily back to life again. (*Kisses her; she does not move.*)
Well, since she will not wake, I'll not delay.

(*To Flowers, who have been laughingly watching*)
Will you not come and dance, while yet we may?

(*Butterfly and Flowers dance and sing*)

O bright gleams the sun on butterfly wings,
And the skies are ablaze with light;
And faster, faster, our dancing swings
As we follow the butterflies' flight.

We called to the Lily in vain, in vain;
For slumber has bound her yet;
Our presence may loose not the icy chain;
Then, come, let us dance and forget.

(*Circle about stage in happy dance and Butterfly leads them out forward left, Bee coming centre watching them.*)

BEE

What! Have they gone and left her here alone?
Of all her lovers, was there then not one
Whose love was strong enough the spell to break?

OBERON

Why, there are many flowers still awake
Who ask no sacrifice made for their sake.

BEE

Little have I to give—no soldier, I,
Nor robed in beauty, like the Butterfly;
No priest of Art, nor apt in minstrelsy
As Grasshopper—but a poor working Bee.
Yet, if to give my life the spell will break
Gladly I'll lose it, Lily, for your sake.

OBERON (*Cynically*)

Easy in *words* the offering to make.

BEE

Try me and test!

OBERON

What if I bid you give
Your wings, and for her sake a cripple live?

BEE

A hard command—yet, if 'twill break the chain
And bring the Lily back to life again,
Then, Oberon, take them!

OBERON

Kiss her first, and see
If she will wake.

(*Bee kisses Lily. She opens her eyes and holds out her hands.*)

LILY

Kiss me once more, dear Bee.

(*He lifts her to her feet and kisses her. Song.*)

BEE and LILY (*Sing*)

LILY

Kiss me once more. The frozen sleep
Has melted from my eyes away,
And warm within my heart I keep
The kisses that you gave today.
Kiss me once more.

Kiss me once more; the ardent sun
Has kissed the earth with lips of fire,
And turns to where, till day be done,
The sea waits, faint with her desire.
Kiss me once more.

BEE

At last, at last, the icy chain
Has broken; turn and slake my drouth.
The kiss I gave you, give again;
O golden head and honey mouth,
Kiss me once more.

The Butterfly, since morn first burned,
Has kissed the flowers, his worshippers;
The Violet long ago has learned
Her minstrel's kisses answer hers.
Kiss me once more.

LILY and BEE

O lips that gave me life anew,
O golden head and honey mouth,
Parched with desire I turn to you,
O let your kisses slake my drouth.
Kiss me once more.

The moth to the pale moon has turned,
Nor turned him to the moon in vain;
The earth to kiss the sea has yearned,
The sea to kiss the land again.
Kiss me once more.

LILY

Oh, I have waked from sleep as sound as this,
Yet never known the rapture of your kiss
Till now. How many wasted hours have gone!

BEE

I never dreamed you would be all my own!
Dear, are you sure that no regret will stir
Within your heart? Cricket and Grasshopper
Can sing your praises; Moth and Butterfly
Go robed in beauty. A poor worker I,
Who can but love you.

LILY

But *your* kiss, you see,
Waked me from sleep. Kiss me again, dear Bee!

(*Fairies and Flowers enter and dance round them, singing. Flowers form a semicircle at back, Oberon at right, and Robin forward left. Bee and Lily centre.*)

FAIRIES and FLOWERS

Broken is the spell that bound her;
Lo! at last true love has found her.

She has wakened from her sleeping,
Warm once more her heart is leaping;

And a lover's eyes behold her,
And a lover's arms enfold her;

And his kisses, close and warm,
Melt the ice and break the charm.

Henceforth may they know together
Pleasant paths and sunny weather;

Many a happy season see,
Lily-bell and Honey-bee.

(*Curtain.*)

Mushrooms

Golden hair on the breezes blown,
Starry eyes that laugh through the shadows,
Shoon of silver, gossamer gown,
Fairies dance in the dewy meadows.

Bright eyes follow their flying feet—
Water rats from the river sedges,
Baby bunnies, furry and sweet,
Sleek, shy mice from the hazel hedges.

Moonshine glimmer on rainbow wings,
Tinkle of song and music sighing,
Wider, wider the circle swings,
Faster the fairy feet are flying.

Then—a cloud o'er the moon is cast,
Heavy and slow the rain is falling;
Fairy feet are scurrying past,
Fairy voices crying and calling.

Veil of moonshine and silver mist,
Cap of scarlet and white owl's feather,
Emerald robes and amethyst,
Vanish into the dark together.

Lone lies the meadow, dark and chill,
Silent the elfin song and chatter,
Only the wind moans o'er the hill
And on the grass the raindrops patter.

But, when the dark is flushed to day,
And through the leaves the sun is glancing,
Coral mushrooms in brave array
Mark where the fairy feet were dancing.

The Lost Shoe

Last night, by the side of the mountain lake,
Half hid in heather and ling,
As I went the way that the wild deer take,
I found a wonderful thing—
A tiny shoe, such as fairies make,
Golden and glimmering.

Some fairy had lost it, dancing there
In the moon-ray, light and fleet,
While the flutes and cymbals shook in the air
A-twinkle with elfin feet;
Lost it and left it—small and fair,
Dainty and gold and sweet.

Will the leprechaun toil all night long
To match the missing shoe?—
Sewing away with a golden thong
Till his weary task is through,
And keeping time with an elfin song
To his hammer's tick, tack, too?

Did she seek it, I wonder, all in vain
Ere the fairy host took flight?
Shall I hear her sob in the summer rain
At my window-pane tonight?
Or see her wander the hills again
With tear-stained face and white?

I think that this morning I will take
The golden, glimmering
Small shoe once more to the mountain lake,
And there, in the fairy ring,
Lay it and leave it—for her sake,
That sorrowful elfin thing.

The First Christmas

One singeth:

Maid Mary came to Bethlehem town,
(Now, Christ be with us all)
The snow adrift upon her gown;
Full wild the wintry wind did blow,
Yet room was none for her to go
In cottage or in hall.
That night to her the Lord came down,
In a poor stable stall.

One sayeth:

That night the stars went singing, and the wind,
And all the choiring angels, row on row,
And shepherds, hasting through the dark to find
Thee in the manger low.

One singeth:

O shepherds brought their gifts to Him,
(Christ dwell with us tonight)
And kings came riding from the dim
Great lands beneath the eastern sky,
And patient ox and ass stood by
With wondering eyes and bright;
And cherubim and seraphim
Sang glory up the height.

One sayeth:

And through the years between us and that morn
Still sounds that angel singing, clear and true;
And still, each Christmas Day, the Child is born
King of our hearts anew.

In The Museum

O you who tread an unknown way,
  Small Daphne or Alcithoë,
The toys with which you used to play,
In the museum gallery
  Of our far, foreign land we see.
Your cart, your doll, your little shoe,
All, all are here—but where are you?

I wonder, when the shadows fall
  From the tall window's pane, and creep
Along the passages, and all
The world we know is fast asleep,
  I wonder, do you ever creep
Out of the by-gone centuries
And look at them with wistful eyes.

When all the thronging feet have passed,
  And lights are out, and twilight's o'er,
If I could only steal at last
Back from the world beyond the door,
  And tiptoe down the aisles once more,
And swiftly fling the portals wide—
I wonder, would you run and hide?

Or should I see your golden hair
  Gleam in the darkness, where you sit
Bending a childish face and fair
Above your doll, and tending it?
  Or watch you through the shadows flit
Tossing your ball, with shouts of glee,
O Daphne or Alcithoë?

Your dust has blown to every wind,
  The hearts that loved you long grown cold,
Yet, in this far-off land, we find
Dim memories of that love of old,
  Though thirty centuries have rolled—
The love that, vainly weeping, gave
Your toys to you, in your small grave.

The doll you loved is still the same
  As when, in days of long ago,
With eager voice you called her name,
Or rocked her gently to and fro
  Crooning a sleep song, soft and low;
But you—who knows where now you be,
Dear Daphne or Alcithoë?

The gods you worshipped are forgot,
  Their altars gone, their fires are dead;
But still in some green, pleasant spot,
Some sweet and sunny garden stead,
  I like to dream your golden head
Still flits about; your little ghost
Plays with the toys you loved the most.

Bed-Time Song

There's a playmate that's waiting for you, my dear,
  The wonderful man in the moon;
You may climb up his ladder of silvery light,
And if you set out at the dead of night
  You'll be there and back by noon.

And he'll let you float in his golden boat,
In his wonderful bark canoe,
And swim in his lake, so dark and deep,
And catch gold fish with the nets of sleep,
The Man in the Moon and you.

And he'll let you into his little house
That's small and round and bright,
And he'll let you polish the shining stars
And put them into their silver cars,
And play in the moon all night.

But when the sun gets up in the sky,
Ere the Moon Man goes to bed
He'll bring you down to the earth again,
And tuck you under your counterpane,
My dear little Sleepy Head.

The Babe

All the old gods are dead, they say. Not so!
For on a midnight, centuries ago—
That night of nights, when Christ to earth came down—
The old gods trooping came
Into the sleeping streets of Bethlehem town;
Not, as their wont, with thunder and with flame,
For Zeus had laid aside
His thunderbolts, and Hera all her pride.
So, to the stable bare

They came, and found Him there;
Within the manger, wrapped in sleep, He lay,
Who over gods and men alike holds sway,
The Lord of earth and air.

Within the manger there He lay and smiled,
A little, naked Child,
No kingly sceptre in His fingers pressed—
Small, crumpled fingers, helpless, straying, sweet,
That curled about her breast
Who lay and kissed those dimpled hands and feet.
And lo! The old gods bowed to Him the knee,
The Word-Made-Flesh—Incarnate Deity.
And Pan played to Him wondrous melodies,
Music, whose sobbing beat
Dripped from his pipe, like water in the heat;
And white Diana laid, with wistful eyes,
Her quiver at His feet.

And since that day no more the sapphire sea
Laves Aphrodite's breast of ivory;
And up the misty hill
And through the coverts, now no longer sounds
The deep-mouthed music of Diana's hounds;
And Pan his piping shrill
Within the glen or by the river-side
Has hushed to silence. Yet they have not died.
Still in the city or the woodland glen
They go their ways, unmarked by mortal men,
And work His sovran will,—
The Babe of Bethlehem, Who reigneth still,—
Until He come again.

Loughnarea

O could I but win to my heart's desire, I know where
I'm fain to be,
But it's over sea and it's over land, and it's half o'
the world away,
By a little lake in the heart o' the hills that once were
home to me.
O Rose o' the World, do you never dream of the
shores of Loughnarea?

'Tis there I would be in the dead of night, when the
ripple is hushed and still,
And never a sigh of the lonely wind goes wandering
through the sedge,
When the only gleam is the ghost of a star that's
drowned in the water chill,
And a mist like a feather of white lies curled on the
rushes that fringe the edge.

I'm fain for my feet to press once more the grass
of the fairy ring,
And to see once more the People of Peace at their
dance 'neath the hawthorn bough,
And I'm fain and fain to hear again the snatches of
song they sing—
Old songs, that sound through the heart o' me,
though I'm far from the hawthorn now.

O Rose o' the World, do you mind the day you stood
'neath the hawthorn's snow,
And a foam of petals lay at your feet, and you gath-
ered them up in your hand?

Could I stand once more at your side again as I
stood in the long ago
The Queens of the Sidhe* might call in vain—tall
Emer and Maeve and Fand.

But I'm far and far over land and sea and the half
o' the world between,
And the Queens of the Sidhe have laughed their last,
and the dancers have danced away,
And the snow-white breast of my Rose o' the World
lies still where the turf grows green,
And my heart, like the ghost of a star, lies drowned
in the depths of Loughnarea.

The Canada Wind

You may praise the glamour and glory of Spring if
you will,
And the beauty of earth, set free from the frost's
embrace;
Give *me* the north wind, sweeping over the hill,
And the scurry of driving snow that stings my
face.

Give me the sky with its glimmer of stars steel-blue,
And a scimitar-blade of moon, swung low and
bright,—
You may keep the languorous darkness, drenched
with dew,
And the slumbrous scents and sounds of the sum-
mer night.

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* Sidhe-Shee: Fairies.

Ah me! for the snow that creaks beneath my tread,
For the triumphing wind, that calls and laughs and sings,
That shouts to the stars and bends the pine-tree's head,
And over the wide white world its challenge flings.

Then praise the dews and the showers of spring if you will,
Or the long, hot summer days with their languid grace;
Give *me* the north wind, piping over the hill,
And the scurry of driving snow, that stings my face.

The Procession

When day is over, and the shadow falls,
Swathing in mists the dome of old St. Paul's,
And, deepening, shuts the busy streets from sight
In the thick curtain of the gathering night,
Lo! Through the winding ways, as dark draws down,
A long procession rides through London Town.

For, while within those streets the waning light
Fades into darkness, and there falls the night,
The homeless beggar, shivering and aghast,
May hear the tramp of many a foot go past,
And see, with banners waving wide and far,
The army of the dead go forth to war.

And not alone the London roads may see
That host ride on in pomp and pageantry;

For many a country shepherd, in amaze,
Watches those banners dance, those torches blaze,
And still the tale to wondering ears tells o'er—
How England's dead ride through her ways once more.

The coastguard, watching from his cliffs, may hear
The creak of rope and block rise to his ear,
And far below, upon the shelving beach,
Hear long dead sailors calling, each to each:
"Ho! Mainsail haul! To sea with all our host;
The great Armada sweeps along our coast."

The peasant, driving his benighted wain,
May hear the clang of armour down the lane,
And, through the shadows, horses' hoofs that ring;
While, in his harness clad, Richard the King,—
With the red cross upon his shield, as when
He fought the infidel—rides by again.

Harry of England and the bowmen good
Who on the fields of France so stoutly stood;
There rides our earliest Edward, tall and fair,
And many a gallant knight and squire are there;
Till, through the mists that drape the eastern sky,
The men of Mons and Marne come riding by.

Fear not, O England! Never foe shall stand
And gaze with conqueror's eyes upon thy strand;
For lo! The living and the dead still keep,
Alike, their watch above thy children's sleep.
And still, each night, when darkness gathers down,
That great procession rides through London Town.

The Changeling

Lennavan mo,* how came she there,
The tall, strange woman, with floating hair?
I heard no finger unlatch the door
And never a footstep crossed the floor;
Yet she stood by your cradle, bending low,
And kissed your cheek, O Lennavan mo.

Lennavan mo, was I aught to blame?
Each night I knelt and I named the Name;
No may-bough crossed the threshold o'er,
And the holy iron was hung on the door,
And I gave no gift to the Lennan Shee,
But she stole the heart of my heart from me.

Lennavan mo, you were strong and fair—
The thing that wails in the cradle there
Is little and twisted and old and white,
And its eyes are full of unholy light;
With blesséd water its brow I crossed
And it shrieked at the touch like a soul that's lost.

Lennavan mo, where e'er you be,
In some dim land of the Daoine Sidhe,
Do you miss your mother's encircling arm,
And the wee white cot, and the fireside warm?
Do you cry, in that country where all is bright,
For the one who loves you by day and night?

O People of Twilight, come and bring
The changeling back to the fairy ring;

* Lennavan mo: My Child.

For it will not drink from a mortal breast,
And in mortal arms it will not rest;
And it wails and wails till my heart is sore;
O bring my lennavan home once more.

The Quicken Boughs

Underneath the quicken boughs,*
To and fro,
Sun and shadow, dark and light
Come and go;
All the tides of day and night
Ebb and flow.

Underneath the quicken boughs
Who wait there?
Maidens of the Daoine Sidhe,†
Tall and fair;
Winds of dream blow ceaselessly
In their hair.

Underneath the quicken boughs
Still they blow,
Tossing o'er the weary earth,
To and fro,
Dreams of sorrow and of mirth,
Joy and woe.

Underneath the quicken boughs,
In a ring,

* The quicken, or mountain ash, is a sacred tree in Ireland.
† Daoine Sidhe-Dhinny Shee: Fairy folk.

Maidens of the Daoine Sidhe
Sit and sing
Songs that still like swallows flee,
Murmuring.

Underneath the quicken boughs,
Fast or slow,
Sun and shadow, day and night,
Still they go;
Endless tides of dark and light
Ebb and flow.

A Rainy Day

Grey skies, and mists that sway
Against my window pane,
And wind that calls all day,
And calls in vain.

Who knows what ancient wrong
Is sounding in that blast?
What inarticulate song
Finds voice at last?

What drippings of old tears
Fall through the sobbing rain?
What sorrows of dim years
Take shape again?

Who knows?—Draw down the blind;
My fire is burning bright;
Out in the rain and wind
Who waits to-night?

Wind In Summer

Come from the gates of the dawning with the sunrise on your wings,
Call to the dreaming waters till the sea awakes and sings,
Till the waves with madcap laughter go dancing upon their way,
And the arms of the white sea-maidens toss in the flying spray.

We have grown spent and weary with glare and dust and heat,
Come from the cool of the woodlands, from green aisles dim and sweet,
Glades where the brown elf lingers, pools where the nixie lies,
Bringing the magic fern-seed to sprinkle on our eyes.

Come through the boughs of the orchard, whispering soft and low,
Shaking the cherry blossom down on the grass like snow;
Dappling the ground with shadows from every branch that swings;
Come from the gates of the dawning, with the sunrise on your wings.

A Lullaby

Little feet, grown weary of play,
Daytime and playtime have passed away,
And the sun swings low in the west;

Fades the glory of sunset light
In ruby and gold and malachite,
  Then rest, my baby, rest.

Darker, softer the shadows grow;
Hark to the sleep call, soft and low,
  Sounding across the night;
Silver stars are hung in the sky,
And a silver moon is riding high
  Like a ship with sails of white.

Golden head on my breast that lies,
Folded fingers and fast shut eyes,
  Slumber has whelmed you deep.
Out on a tide of dream and dew
The galleys of Night are bearing you;
  Then sleep, my baby, sleep.

Spindrift

Spindrift—foam of the sea,
Acrid and salt with tears,
  Borne on the wandering winds—unresting, bitter with doom,
Still as of old it blows
Across the echoing years,
  Over the ghosts of the galleys of Greece, the triremes of Rome.

All the ships of the past,
The navies of old renown,
  Corsair and merchant, the valour of England, the pride of Spain,

Shadowy hulls, through the mists
From the Sea of the Shadows blown,
  Bitter and chill it sweeps through their sails, they sink into mist again.

Spindrift,—foam of the sea,
Acrid, bitter of breath,
  Borne on the winds forever, unresting, laden with doom,
Blowing across the years
Salt with the brine of death,
  Over the ghosts of the galleys of Greece, the triremes of Rome.

The Bugles' Call

There's a sound of bugles blowing,
  There's a triumph in the wind,
There's a tramp of footsteps going;
And who heeds the tear-drops flowing
  Of the women left behind?

There is many a lass is sighing
  For the lad she'll never see;
On a battle field he's lying,
O'er his head the trumpets crying
  As they march to victory.

But he will not heed their calling—
  O, be sure his rest is deep!
For above the battle's brawling
He has heard the falling, falling
  Of the drowsy waves of sleep.

And when all the battle's over,
  And its memories growing dim,
O'er her nest amid the clover
The lark may singing hover,
  But she will not waken him.

There's a wail of bugles blowing,
  There's a trouble on the wind;
Marching feet are coming, going,
But who heeds the tear-drops flowing
  Of the women left behind?

Cradle Song

  Husheen lo!
The sun is westing,
Birds are nesting,
  Shadows grow;
And above your cradle swinging
Mother's singing—
  Husheen lo!
  Husheen lo!

  Husheen lo!
The night is falling
Winds are calling
  Soft and slow;
And the evening star is gleaming
O'er your dreaming,
  Husheen lo!
  Husheen lo!

Husheen lo!
If on the morrow
Cometh sorrow,
Who shall know?
God, His watch above you keeping,
Guard your sleeping;
Husheen lo!
Husheen lo!

A Question

Will I be missing you, do you say?
And you to be going so far away
Over the great sea, wild and grey?

Will I be missing you? O my dear,
Will the sun ever shine and you not here,
Or the birds be singing their music clear?

Others faces may come and pass,
As the shadows fleet o'er the wind-swept grass,
Or my image slips through the looking-glass.

But every wind through my heart that blows
Names your name to me as it goes,
And I hear your voice in each stream that flows.

In every sunset your face I see,
Through whispering woods you walk with me
While your hand in mine lies quietly.

Will I be missing you, do you say?
Sure, my heart it follows you, night and day,
And you to be going so far away.

The Roads of France—1918

The roads of France ran fair and white
  Five years ago,
Beneath a sunny sky and bright;
Beside them orchard branches swung
Heavy with fruit, and vineyards hung
  Their purple clusters low.

The roads of France—no longer white
  They run today.
God pity all poor souls tonight
Who walk those piteous ways that lie
Wrenched, twisted, battered, 'neath a sky
  Of scarred and sullen grey.

The roads of France—their blossoms bright
  Long since are dead;
Only the rows of crosses white
Rank upon rank beside them rise,
Each marking where, all dreamless, lies
  Some nameless hero's head.

The roads of France—they lie tonight
  Shattered and grey,—
Poor, piteous things beneath the light;
Yet dearer far to us they be,
For Honour, Valour, Memory
  Now walk them day by day.

I Spoke To God

I spoke to God and said:
"Thou, Who hast given to me
Only Thine enmity,
Giving me tears to drink, and bitter bread
Earned by hard service, loneliness and sorrow,
And pain, and weariness,
A life I asked not for, and on the morrow
An instant's passage into nothingness;
How should I love Thee, Who hast set me here
To wander in a drear and endless wild?
I love Thee not nor fear."
He said: "Poor child!

"If I had given to thee
Fullness of all the earth,
Lapped thee in laughter, cradled thee in mirth,
Thou hadst forgotten Me.
And since, forgetting Me, all else had left thee,
And loves had failed thee, pleasures ceased to be,
Lo! for a few brief hours I have bereft thee,
That thou might'st hold them through eternity.
Look up to where I stand,—
From where thou wanderest, passion-tossed and wild,—
Waiting to lay them back into thine hand,
Poor child!"

Episodes

Desire, delight and pain,
  A stir in the heart of earth,
Sunshine and falling rain—
  Birth.

Brief, sweet laughter and tears,
  A tumult of eddying strife,
Drift and the wreckage of years—
  Life.

Smarting of dust in the eyes,
  A moment's catching of breath,
Sudden, a glad surprise—
  Death.

Two

If I should die tonight—and through the press
  Of thronging ghosts that haunt the Border Line
  Between that land and ours, this soul of mine
Go, seeking solace in its loneliness;

While the unnumbered multitude of dead
  Pass and repass me with incurious eyes,
  And locked, pale lips, that hold all mysteries,
Where I walk, silent and uncomforted;

Yet, in that land of shadows, there are two
  Whose welcome will not fail me, though I stray
  Bewildered, lost, alone in that dim way
'Mid the unfriendly ghosts—my dog and you.

For this I know, wherever I may fare,
  Sudden, amid the shadows, I shall see
  His little head pressed close against my knee,
His eager tail wagging to find me there.

And you, who for so many years have trod
  The floor of Heaven, when you shall know my shade
  Waits in the darkness, lonely and afraid,
Will you not hasten down the stair of God,

And through the thronging phantoms to my side?
  While all the paths of that dim Borderland
  Grow bright beneath your feet and I shall stand
With two who love me, and be satisfied.

Three Kings Came Riding

Three Kings came riding
  Into Bethlehem Town,
Each one bore a sceptre,
  A sceptre and a crown;
All at the inn stable
  They lighted down.

There in a manger
  Baby Jesus slept,
Dimpled small fingers
  Round Mary's bosom crept.
Ox and ass beside Him
  Their vigil kept.

Angels stood waiting
  At His Feet and Head;
Three Kings came riding
  And knelt before His bed,
Bringing Him for offering
  White gold and red.

Rich gifts they gave Him,—
  Homage for a King,
Frankincense for Honour,
  Myrrh for Suffering;
Mary, Maid and Mother,
  Watched, wondering.

Three Kings came riding,
  In purple and in pall,
Lords to do their bidding
  And servants at their call,
And found, within a manger,
  The Lord of all.

Song

O come from the gates of the West,
  Sweet Night, in your garments of grey,
And bring to us healing and rest
  From the toil and the tumult of day.
The twilight has crept o'er the hill,
  The wind is asleep in the tree,
The music of birds has grown still,
  And silent the song of the sea.

Ere sunset shall fade from the skies
  In its glories of crimson and gold,
O come! From your caverns arise
  With the dreams and the memories of old;
With the dusk and the dew on your wing,
  And starshine and shadow at play,
Come, laden with slumber, and bring
  Us rest from the cares of the day.

Across The Dark

Across the dark, beyond the evening star,
  What ways lie there, O Friend?
You who have won to those strange lands and far,
  What of the journey's end?
Of that lone passage, dark and perilous,
What word have you for us?

What welcome met you in that unknown land?
  What feet familiar came?
What loves of old-time clasped you by the hand
  Or called upon your name?
What brave old jests? What laughter and what tears
Rose from the buried years?

So do we cry—but vainly hold our breath,
  Waiting in hope to hear,
Across the dark, through the barred doors of death,
  Your answer, O most dear.
No word comes from those guarded gates to tell
  If you fare ill or well.

But still we dream that, faring through the night,
Beyond the evening star,
We yet shall reach some longed-for land of light
And find you where you are;
And on the borders of that unknown land
Our hand shall clasp your hand.

When I Lie A-Dying, Lass

When I lie a-dying, lass, I pray you, promise me
To open wide the window, that my spirit may go free
From lane shut in and sheltered field to where the great waves roar,
Breaking in from open sea, to crash upon the shore.

Where the storm-cloud gathers, and the winds and thunders are,
Crying like the curlew, I shall sweep across the bar;
Leave the weary land behind and, cradled on the main,
Rocking in the long green swells, shall wash me clean again.

When I lie a-dying, lass, I'm fain to be alone,
So fling the casement open wide, and kiss me, and begone,
That the salt, sweet wind may enter, and may bear my spirit free
From lanes shut in and sheltered fields, out to the open sea.

Mary Of The Candles

At night, when dusk comes creeping
  As quiet as a mouse,
And marching troops of shadows
  Invade the silent house;
When old familiar corners
  To dens of fear have grown,
And I am small and frightened
  And helpless and alone;
When hosts of goblin fancies
  Await me on the stair,
To Mary of the Candles
  I kneel and make my prayer.

O Mary, Maid and Mother,
  When little Jesus pressed
At night, when fell the shadows,
  His Head upon your breast,
Did you not watch His sleeping
  Lest He should wake in fear,
And groping through the darkness
  Be glad to find you near?
Then, Mother, guard my slumbers
  And bid my fears depart.
O Mary of the Candles,
  Give light within my heart.

She comes across the darkness
  With smiling lips and eyes,
Her wind-blown hair is fragrant
  With dews of Paradise;

She croons old rhymes of childhood,
  As once, in Galilee,
And phantom hosts of shadows
  Before her coming flee.
The stars, that are her tapers,
  Make all the dusk grow bright,
And Mary of the Candles
  Fills the dark house with light.

A Song Of The Sea

When the winds are out and the waves awaken,
  Calling, calling across the foam,
A voice from the years that Time has taken
  Cries aloud to me: "Come, oh come!
Leave the land, with its dust and heat,
Come to my long waves, cool and sweet,
To the wide green stretches of wind-swept water;
  White arms wait for you. Home, come home!

"Come, ah, come! I have gifts to bring to you—
  Shadowy depths where silence lies;
Sea-maids' arms to clasp you and cling to you;
  Sea-maids' kisses, cool on your eyes;
Sands of silver, and rose-lipped shells;
  Emerald isles where the slow wave swells;
Surge and song of the sunlit ocean;
  Winds that wander and foam that flies."

When the winds are out and the waters waken
  Let me return to the calling sea,

To the dim, sweet depths, to the waves wind-shaken,
Back to the arms that wait for me.
I will put out from the weary shore,
Fain to lie on her breast once more,
With her arms to fold me, her voice to sing to me,
Her long grey billows my couch to be.

The Open Road

I will go out where the great winds blow,
Go out to the open downs,
With the stars above and the turf below,
Where the ribbon of road runs, white as snow,—
From the toil and fret of the towns.

I will leave behind me cark and care,
And will shake my shoulders free
From the weary burden that townsfolk bear—
I will walk where the great winds walk, and where
The downs sing to the sea.

I will go out, like my sires of yore,
I will tread the path they trode;
I will know the fret of the towns no more;
I will go out from their dust and roar—
Out, out to the open road.

Life

Life has given me of its best—
Laughter and weeping, labour and rest,
Little of gold, but lots of fun;
Shall I then sigh that all is done?

No, not I; while the new road lies
All untrodden, before my eyes.

Life has given me dreams to keep,
Glad awakings, and slumbers deep,
Friends to love me, and foes to fight;
Shall I then weep when falls the night?
No, not I; since the road runs on
Through the dark to another dawn.

Life has given me grief and glee,
Song of the wind, and salt of the sea,
Pain, and pleasure, and quiet breath;
Shall I then fear the face of Death?
No, not I; who would fain unfold
All the secrets his locked lips hold.

The Irish Peasant To His Mistress

If I had silver at my command,
Many's the gift I'd lay in your hand;
I would be giving you, O my sweet,
Shoes of silk for your little feet,
Silken gloves for your fingers white,
And a chain of gold for your delight.
But, since 'tis young I am and poor,
None of all these I hold in store.

Had I the power to give gifts more rare,
Sure, I'd pluck the stars to adorn your hair;
Wind of the west and wind of the south
Should blow you perfumes, sweet as your mouth;

Wine of the gods your drink should be,
And to light your candle, astore machree,
I'd draw the moon from the misty skies—
But she'd fade and die before your eyes.

Yet 'tis myself has gifts to bring—
Dappled trout from the crystal spring,
Roses, still with the dew-drops pearled,
Fresh as when God first made the world,
Coral mushrooms, all freaked with fawn
By the Good Folks' feet that danced till dawn;
And, if it's more you are wanting still,
'Tis my heart I'll give you, to keep or kill.

Pan

He sleeps in the sedge by the river side,
(Pan, goatfoot Pan)
Whispering waters past him glide,
Leaping, dancing, chuckling with glee,
Pausing, lapping their shores to see
The sleeper who lies so quietly—
Pan, goatfoot Pan.

Never now do his shepherds bring
(Pan, goatfoot Pan)
To his dark shrine their offering—
Rough, red wine, in a beechen cup,
Leaf-wrapped cheese, that the God may sup;
No wheaten loaf is now offered up
To Pan, goatfoot Pan.

Dryads peer from their leafy brake,
(Pan, goatfoot Pan)
Wondering, when shall the sleeper wake.
All the folk of the field and sedge,
Water-rats from the river edge,
Sleek, brown mice from the hazel hedge,
Peeping at goatfoot Pan.

There I found him, ere morn was done,
(Pan, goatfoot Pan)
Lying there, a-sprawl in the sun;
Twitter of birds above his head,
Broken pipes, whence the songs had fled;
Is he asleep, or is he dead?
(Pan, goatfoot Pan.)

Though We Are Old

We have grown old. The world is past its prime.
No more incarnate Beauty in the Spring
Walks; through the long sweet nights of summer-time
The nightingale shall sing
No more, no more, ah! never more to us
His crown song, pouring forth its notes of gold.
Lo! broken is the dream and ruinous,
And we grow old.

No more for us, with wind-blown hair and bright,
The dryads dance beneath the forest tree,
Or Aphrodite's shoulder, rosy white,
Breaks the long sweep of sea.

No winter brings us, with its firelight,
The dreams of young adventure, gay and bold.
The fires are out upon our hearth tonight,
And we grow old.

Yet still young lovers, walking in the glades,
Shall hear Pan's piping, sounding shrill and clear,
Or watch white Dian with her laughing maids
Follow the flying deer.
Still the sun shines, and still the children play,
And youths are passionate and maids are cold,
And still the world goes on its laughing way
Though we grow old.

In The Slum

A squalid street, where the hot sunshine falls
On rows of roughcast shacks, grimy and grey,
In the slight shade cast by the crumbling walls
The mangy dogs and ragged children play;
Faint with stale odours swoons the air away;
The children gasp and quarrel; somewhere calls
A dissonant bell; a Jewish pedlar bawls
His frowsy wares, down streets as foul as they.

Dust, grime and heat o'er all—but suddenly,
Fluttering in apple-green and tipped with rose,
Incarnate Springtime, sauntering slowly by,
A laughing glance across her shoulder throws
From ardent eyes that hold all Italy—
And all the sordid street to beauty glows.

Our Lady Of Twilight

When day is past and the shadows grow
Our Lady of Twilight steals soft and slow
From the starlit gardens of Paradise,
Bringing her dreams to weary eyes.

The misty moonbeam paths are sweet
With the silvery chiming of her feet;
And the dusk is full of murmurings,
Faint and lovely, of unseen wings.

In the garden close, at sight of her,
The tall white lilies are all astir;
And she walks among them with dreaming eyes
Fresh with the dews of Paradise.

So nightly, adown the moonbeam stair,
With the winds of slumber in her hair,
Bringing her dreams to weary men,
Our Lady of Twilight comes again.

The Dreamer

He walks among the woods when twilight flings
  O'er all the unquiet land its boon of rest;
He hears the flutter of the wild-bird wings
  That in the darkness brood above their nest,
And sees the sun, that hastens down the west
  To meet his love, the Sea, and panting flings
Himself upon the coolness of her breast,
  Who stills his passions with soft murmurings.

His eyes are dark with shadows; at his feet,
With nodding heads, the drowsy poppies blow;
While round his head, with murmurous sound and sweet,
On silent wings dim dreams flit to and fro.
So through the summer night the Dreamer stands,
Holding the keys of slumber in his hands.

Sea-Faring

They who go a-seafaring
Happy folk they be,
For all the wide and goodly world
God gives them for to see—
Sunwashed seas beneath the Line,
Northern berg and floe,
Coral reef and fronded palm,
As the galleons go.

They who go a-seafaring
Many sights they see,—
Caverns where the kraken sprawls
And great sea-snakes be;
Lonely isles and cities lost
Where no mortals stray,
Old-time towns, whose towers rise
Through the sheeted spray.

They who go a-seafaring
North and South they run,
See the sands where mermaids lie
Naked in the sun,

Singing, as the galleons sail,
(Golden hair a-gleam)
Songs the wistful shipman hears
Sounding through his dream.

They who go a-seafaring
Many wonders know;
O'er all the wide and goodly world
The ships pass to and fro;
Lazy tides in locked lagoons,
Seas where mists lie curled—
Storms and thunders of the North,—
Well they know the world.

Wind Voices

What did you hear when the wind was crying—
Crying out in the dark and rain?
When golden and red the leaves were flying,
And big drops beat on the window pane?
Was it the sound of an old refrain
That called and called and would not be still,—
A voice from the long dead years again?
Hark to the wind upon the hill!

What did you hear when the house was sleeping—
Lying alone in the darkness there?
Was it a foot up the passage leaping,
And old-time laughter upon the stair?
Ah, but the old-time days were fair,
When love and laughter were ours at will!
Where are they now, I pray you, where?
Hark to the wind upon the hill!

The Dreamers

We dreamed by night and we dreamed by day,
(Alas, for the dream that ne'er came true!)
Some dreamed of a future far away,
Some dreamed of a home where children play,
But I—oh, I dreamed of you.

One dreamed of the wind in northern pines,
(Ah, never more shall he hear its tone!)
And one of hedges where hawthorn twines,
And one of wattle and southern vines;
I dreamed of your face alone.

They dreamed of honour and wealth and fame,
(Ah, dreams of youth that so seldom last!)
I dreamed of a voice that called my name,
Of the sound of a foot that never came,
Of eyes that smiled from the past.

So we dreamed by night and we dreamed by day,
(Alas, for the dream which ne'er came true!)
They dreamed of wealth and a flowery way,
And their hopes were high and their hearts were gay;
I only dreamed of you.

In The City

Heat—
Pitiless, quivering, aflare!
Pavements that scorch bare, grimy, childish feet
Groping for coolness there.

Alley and fetid lane
  Pour forth their living flood
Seeking relief, and seeking all in vain,
  While, like a ball of blood,

Down through the tortured sky
  The sun drops. Night comes with no wind's sweet boon;
Close and more close the heavy shadows lie,
  Under a blood-red moon.

One voice of moan
  Sounds from the city, echoing on and on
Down all the streets—a universal groan!
  Till, with the dawn,

The angry sun
  Leaps from his burning bed, resumes his sway,
And gasping courts and alleys have begun
  Another day.

The Thousand Islands

Starry crowned, majestic fronted, rising from the river's flow,
Plumy crests of pine above them, purple depths of wave below,
Song of wind and sigh of water all the voices that they know—

Save that when the evening sunset bars with flame the barren west,

Or the moon with fretted silver diapers the river's
breast,
Laughs the loon across the water, booms the bittern
from her nest.

In their stony hearts what visions hold they of the
life they knew,
When the Indian through their channels paddled in
his bark canoe?—
Now no more he builds his altars to his mighty
Manitou.

So they stand, serene, majestic—rising from the
river's flow,
Plumy crests of pine above them, purple depths of
wave below—
Song of wind and sigh of water all the voices that
they know.

All Hallows Eve

(There is a superstition in Ireland that upon the Eve of All Saints' Day, which we call Hallowe'en, the dead are allowed to visit their friends upon earth, to break bread with them and to remain with them till midnight strikes.)

Will you not come, dear heart? Tonight alone
Of all the weary year,
God's tender hand has opened wide the door
That stands between us and the love of yore;
Between us, with our mortal hope and fear,
And those from doubting gone.

See, I have swept the hearth and piled the fire
With glowing turf, and set
Your chair once more in its accustomed place;
Will you not leave your heaven, and turn your face
For this one night, where I, who love you yet,
Wait you with wild desire?

Forego one hour your heaven's warmth and light;
They cannot need you there
As I, who only long once more to place
My hand in yours, to see once more your face,
And feel your fingers lying on my hair;
Give me at least tonight.

The Little House We Dreamed Of

The little house we dreamed of—that lies out over yonder
Where the shadows gather, across the quiet wold,
Does the light still linger around its eaves, I wonder,
As when first we knew it—O Heart o' Gold?

Oh, Heart o' Gold, where you rest among the shadows,
Dreaming through the long years, while seasons ebb and flow,
Do you still remember that cottage in the meadows,
The gardens green, the ways serene, we walked so long ago?

The little house we dreamed of—its rooms were full of laughter,

(Dear, do you remember the merry tales we told,
Songs that brought an echo twitt'ring from the rafter
Where the swallows nested—O Heart o' Gold?)

The little house we dreamed of—dear vision, ours
no longer,
Gone into the darkness that wraps the years of old!
Will it find fulfilment when, with faith grown
stronger,
We shall hail the morning—O Heart o' Gold?

Nuts And May

Sing the old melodies over and over,
Sorrow and sighing shall cease at their call;
Children's glad play in the meadows of clover,
Laughter and happiness ring through them all.
Gone are the years, with their burden of pain,
Gone in the sound of that merry refrain—

Here we go gathering nuts and may,
Nuts and may, nuts and may,
Here we go gathering nuts and may
On a bright and sunny morning.
Hark to the sound of the children at play,
Out of the seasons of far away;
Back comes our youth again, blythe and gay,
Spring is the world adorning.
Here we go gathering nuts and may
On a bright and sunny morning.

Out of the past it comes, dancing and swinging,
How to its music old memories throng!
Scent of the lilac, and bird-voices singing,
Children's gay footsteps that hurry along;
Springtime and youth, with their hours of gold,
Laughter and love and the faces of old.

Here we go gathering nuts and may,
Nuts and may, nuts and may;
Here we go gathering nuts and may
On a bright and sunny morning.
Mark ye the lilt of it, gallant and gay;
Hearts grown weary and heads grown grey
Follow its call to the old-time way,
Trouble and sorrow scorning.
Here we go gathering nuts and may
On a bright and sunny morning.

Sahara

Within my walléd garden
Soft breezes come and go,
And trees are full of blossom
Where birds are singing low;
Its guarded gates are golden,
With pearls its walls are set,
And gleaming, tall and slender,
Rise tower and minaret.

Outside my walléd garden
There lies a desert land,
Nor tree, nor bird, nor blossom,

But only sky and sand.
Wild in the hot sirocco
The whirling dust is blown;
Yet there I'll set my kingdom,
There will I rear my throne.

Fair is my walléd garden,
But ah, the days are long!
Wearied my eyes with beauty,
Wearied my ears with song;
My heart is tired of dreaming—
Fain would I know the strife,
The laughter, and the sorrows
That fill the wider life.

Farewell, my walléd garden;
Farewell, my dreaming days;
I'll leave your guarded portals
To seek the desert ways—
There will I rear my palace,
There will I set my throne,
And bid the waters rise there,
And bid the seed be sown—

Until the waste shall blossom;
And lo! there shall arise
A new land and a splendid
Where now the desert lies;
No dreamland, walled and guarded,
But a large life and free,
Fulfilled of tears and laughter,
And life—and liberty.

Yet still my walléd garden
  Shall in the sunlight sleep,
And bird and tree and blossom
  Their wonted places keep;
Till, done with tears and laughter,
  Weary with stress and strain,
I in my walléd garden
  Turn to my rest again.

Disillusion

Perchance from the East his ship shall come
  With the sun that leaps from the crimson tide;
With blare of trumpet and beat of drum
  And clash of cymbals, my knight shall ride;
The sun a-gleam on his hair of gold,
Eager and young, alert and bold;
  How his eyes shall flash as he gains my side.

Or perhaps he will come through the noontide heat,
  With soft caresses and dreaming eyes;
He shall sing me a drowsy song and sweet,
  He shall weave me a web of lullabies;
And in meshes of dreams shall my heart be wound;
And his arm in dreams shall enfold me round;
  And life be a dream of summer skies.

Or it may be when twilight shadows fall
  I shall know his footstep that mounts the stair,
I shall hear his voice through the darkness call
  And run to the door and meet him there;

And the room shall be warm and the fire burn bright,
And the short hours go with laughter and light,
  And never a thought of pain or care.

'Twas thus I dreamed—but when midnight came,
  'Mid wailing of voices through the gloom,
Broken and beaten and bowed with shame,
  With faltering feet my stair he clomb.
And dear was the dream-love's youth and bliss,
But dearer by far was the clinging kiss,
  When—weary and wounded—my knight came home.

West Wind

Come, O Wind, from the dreaming west,
Sweeping over the water's breast,
Bring my unquiet spirit rest.

Blow, O Wind, from the dying light;
Touch my heart with your mystic might;
Bring me peace with the coming night.

I am weary of toil and pain,
Garish sunshine and blinding rain;
Bring me the kindly dark again.

Bring me the shadows long and deep;
Come, O Wind, o'er the waters sweep,
Sing to my heart and bid it sleep.

A Song Of Age

Hey for the days of laughter,
  Hey for the dreams of youth!
Life held no dark hereafter,
  No touch of pain or ruth;
Then sorrow lay a-sleeping,
Unknown were care and weeping,
And all the years were keeping
  Were laughter, love and truth.

Our madcap youth is over,
  Gone its unclouded skies,
And you and I, O Lover,
  Grow old and staid and wise;
But through the swift years going
Love knows no ebb nor flowing,
And still his fires are glowing,
  Dear, in your steadfast eyes.

Fair Hills

O, far, fair hills, whereon our child feet straying
  Found many wonders there!
O, towering summits, where grey mists are swaying!
  Say, are you still as fair

As when of old each valley was enchanted,
  And giant forms of yore
Roamed through your woods and caverns, fairy-haunted,
  And by your white sea-shore?

We saw them then—but ah, the years have banished
The wide, wise childish eyes;
From gaze grown old the fairies all have vanished,
Or are but memories.

We strain our eyes in vain; grown dim with weeping,
No longer may we see
Oscar and Finn pursue the dun deer's leaping,
Or feasting merrily.

Ah, lost child faith! Yet still our hearts are yearning
To walk your ways once more;
To see the seasons passing and returning
Above your summits hoar.

To lie once more amid your heath and bracken
And hear the wind's refrain;
It may be the old visions would awaken,
The old dreams come again.

Ah, far, fair hills! that still your watch are keeping
As when *our* hills you were,
We have grown old—so old—and tired of weeping;
Say, are *you* still as fair?

The Return

They said you had gone to the heavenly home
Where all was so bright and fair
That you'd quite forgotten us here—and so,
When the lamps were out and the fire burned low,
I cried in the corner there,
Until, in the dark, I felt you come
And lay your hand on my hair.

And all at once it was gone—the pain
  That had made my heart so sore;
For you stroked my hand in the dark, and said
That you loved me still, although you were dead,
  And I mustn't cry any more.
And I knew I had got you back again,
  For you laughed as you used before.

I told them you came; but they shook their head
  And said that it was not true—
That I only dreamed you were here last night,
When I sat and cried in the flickering light
  Of the fire and wished for you;
That no one ever came back from the dead,
  For the grave would not let them through.

But I *know* you came—though I'll never tell,
  And whenever the light gets low,
I'll cuddle down in the dark by your side
As I used, in the days before you died,
  And we'll whisper together so;
And you'll tell me the tales I love so well,
  And kiss me before you go.

So I do not care, though they say you've gone
  To walk on the heavenly floor,
And you've quite forgotten us—for I know
You came to me, and it isn't so,
  And I needn't cry any more;
That whenever I sit in the dark alone
  You will come, as you came before.

A Vilanelle

The west was a rose aflame,
And ever in on the sand
The great sea murmuring came;

Her hand was warm in my hand;
Oh, water that called and cried
To the lonely heart of the land,

O restless, eddying tide!
My heart was lonely and cold
As your waves, and unsatisfied,

Till she came from the sunset's gold
With the gold of the sun on her hair;
And the wild desires of old,

And the weary tide of care,
(O waves that laugh to the strand)
Ebbed at the sight of her
And her hand that lay in my hand.

The Piper

Over the hills and into the silence,
  Where the sun sets, ruddy and dim,
Lingering notes of magic music,
  The piper calls and we follow him.

All forgotten our sins and sorrows,
  Hope and failure, and toil and play,
All our hearts astir to the piping
  Calling us to the far away.

Men turn back from their ceaseless striving,
  Toys are dropped from the childish hands;
One and all we follow the piper
  Piping us to the unknown lands.

Each one hears, in that magic music,
  Promise of that his soul holds best;
Children yearn for a land of laughter,
  Old men turn to a land of rest.

So to each soul on earth forever
  Sometimes cometh an evening dim,
When, to the lands beyond the sunset,
  The piper calls and we follow him.

The Coward

Last night when the wind was crying
  I heard a voice in the storm,
The voice of one who was lying
  Deep 'neath the winter snow,
And I sat by my fireside warm
  And heard the tones I know
Calling out of the storm to me,
  And I—I dared not go.

Was it the wind that blew?
  Was it the falling rain?
Or did a hand I knew—
  There in the dark outside—
Beat at the window pane?
  While the dear voice called and cried;
And I—oh, fool! who did not dare
  Fling the window wide.

Dear, should you come tonight,
Would I not draw you in,
Back to the warmth and light,
Out of the wind and rain;
But the storm goes on and no voice within
Calls to me ever again;
And my chance was lost last night, when you stood
Outside my window pane.

The Lights Of London Town

You prate about your cornfields waving golden, mile by mile,
Of the freedom of your prairies, of your mountains bare and brown;
But my heart is sore within me, for a little, sea-girt isle,
And all night I lie a-dreaming of the lights o' London Town.

O the twinkling lights o' London—when the fireflies dance and gleam,
And the silence gathers thicker and the dark is drawing down,
With each flash among the corn-stalks they go flashing through my dream,
Till I gaze across the prairie at the lights o' London Town.

Till the murmur of the city o'er the cornfields echoes on!

(O the friendly voice of London, that no flood of years can drown!)
There's a glimmer to the eastward. Well, another dream has gone;
And, as daylight comes, they vanish—the dear lights o' London Town.

The Seagull

O strong sea-sailor, whose flight lies over
The waste of waters, so wild and grey,
Borne on the breast of the sea, thy lover,
Child of the winds and as fleet as they!
When the crimson sun dips low in the west
To what far land is thy course addressed?
Wooed by the storms, by the waves caressed,
Where wilt thou nest thee at close of day?

Could we but mount upon strong white pinions,
Find and follow and share thy flight,
Say, to what dim, unknown dominions
Thou wouldst lead us at close of light?
Would the lost Atlantis lie before us?
Or siren sands, with their fairy chorus,
And silvery palm fronds swinging o'er us?
Or the Isles of the Blessed loom in sight?

Nay, not there wouldst thou make thy dwelling,
Bird of the storms and mate of the sea;
Sweeter to thee the tempest swelling,
Storm and danger more dear to thee.
Shout of winds o'er the waters sweeping,

Crash of waves on the black rocks leaping,
These are the sounds that guard thy sleeping,
Child of the waters, wild and free.

The Rivers

Within the confines of the Land of Shadows
There rise two springs of water, cool and deep;
And one flows on through asphodelian meadows,
And one by rocky paths its wave must sweep;
And all the souls of men a tryst must keep
Beside those springs, when from the body free,
And some in Lethe's wave their lips shall steep,
And some shall turn to sad Mnemosyne.

Then they who drink of Lethe, shall forget
The short-lived joys of earth and all its moan,
The weariness, the fever and the fret,
Ay, and the faces they in life have known,
And all the sorrows that the years have sown,
And friendships lost, and loves that ceased to be;
And wander forth, rejoicing and alone,
From Memory, pain and care forever free.

But those whose lips Mnemosyne shall drain
Must hie them forth by wild and stony ways,
And evermore dead joy and living pain
Shall haunt their dreams by night, and all their days.
Faces of old-time friends shall on them gaze
Through mists, and loves of old their eyes shall see;

And all eternity be but a space
Haunted by ghosts of by-gone Memory.

Yet, dearest, if it may be that your face
In dream and daylight still shall shine on me,
Lethe shall know me not, but the wild maze
And bitter waters of Mnemosyne.

Could We But Understand

Could we but understand the mystery
Of this great world our feet are set within!
Alas! Our finite eyes can only see
Great formless, shadowy shapes, that spin and spin
The webs of darkness we are tangled in.
We dream that we are safe within Thy Hand;
But—could we understand!

Could we but see why Thou to man hast given
A mind that ever seeks to see Thee plain,
And yet hast hid Thyself and all Thy Heaven
So deep in mists, that still our eyes must strain
To glimpse Thy glories, all in vain, in vain.
We dream that fair beyond that veil they be;
But—could we see!

Could we but know why Thou, Who madest us all
In Thine own image, and in us hast set
Dreams of Thy love, ever shouldst let us fall
Here in the outer darkness, and shouldst let
Bewilderment and sin our spirits fret.
We dream we shall not always wander so;
But—could we know!

The Sea

I never have seen the sea—
  But through my sleep each night
Its waters beckon to me;
  I watch them glimmer and gleam;
Their foaming crests of white
  Go dancing through my dream;
And they gleam and gloom and smile at me,
  But—I never have seen the sea.

I never have heard the sea—
  But, when the night-winds blow,
In my dreams there comes to me
  The surge and thunder and sweep
Of waters far below—
  The voice of the mighty deep
That cries and calls and croons to me;
  But—I never have heard the sea.

I never shall know the sea—
  My little, inland round
Lies far from the ecstasy
  Of its billows, rolling wide;
With many a mete and bound
  Unknown to its swelling tide.
In sleep its great waves call to me,
  But—I never shall know the sea.

St. Michael and All Angels, 1917

Smoke of asters by the stream
  Where the red blood runs,
Carolling of birds, that sounds
  Through the roar of guns;

And a thousand shattered fanes
  Lift to heaven the cry:
"Lo! Once more the Dragon brood
  Rears its crest on high.

"Where the golden wheat fields shone,
  Black its road now lies;
Angels of the Living God,
  Help our agonies."

Winnowing of angel wings
  Up the steeps of light,
All the Chivalry of God
  Leap to join the fight—

Faces terrible and fair,
  Swords that wheel and flame;
Echoing streets of Paradise
  Sounding to the Name—

Silver trumpets pealing high,
  Banners blowing far,
Michael, with the Hosts of God,
  Rides again to war.

"The Fair Hills Of Holy Ireland"

Tonight outside my window the winds unheeded
blow,
For I'm lying here and dreaming of a land I used
to know—
The pleasant hills of Ireland, agleam with misty
light,
Their slopes once more rise green before my wistful
eyes tonight!

'Tis far I am from Ireland—the long, grey leagues
of sea
Go stretching out, a weary way, between my home
and me;
But the sad waves wake to laughter as they dance
across the main,
And singing go, they love her so, to kiss her coasts
again.

And what although her hills may seem to strangers
bleak and bare,
They're still the hills of home to me—the pleasant
hills and fair;
And though her coast be rough and wild, her waters
darken o'er,
They're still to me the Irish sea, they're still the
Irish shore.

So tonight outside my window the winds unheeded blow,
For I'm lying here and dreaming of a land I used to know—
Ireland, the land of heart's desire, the land of heart's delight!
Her hills rise round, her water's sound calls through my sleep tonight.

Red Iscariot

Far in the outer darkness,
Through spaces all unknown,
The soul of Red Iscariot
Fared through the night alone;
And the winds that blew between the worlds,
They bit him to the bone.

Little, and lost, and lonely,
Trembling and sore afraid,
Through the stark night forever
The soul of Judas strayed;
And in all the paths of the outer dark
Was none to hear or aid.

Through wrecks of ruined planets,
Where stars in ashes lay—
Chaos of systems long outworn
Ere earth whirled into day—
The soul of Red Iscariot
Stumbled upon its way.

In the High House of Heaven
  Were mirth and song outpoured,
Where sat the Twelve, together
  With Him, the Incarnate Word,
And cherubim and seraphim
  Gave glory to the Lord.

But whelmed in night and terror,
  Trembling and sore afraid,
Little, and lost, and lonely,
  The soul of Judas strayed;
And he called across the darkness
  To Him he had betrayed.

Across the angels' singing
  That call for mercy came,
And the music dropped to silence
  As sinks a dying flame;
And the Twelve cried out in wrath and scorn
  Upon the traitor's name.

But Christ the Lord went downward
  Where angels silently
Knelt, and He crossed the golden floor
  And flung the portals free;
And He cried across the outer dark:
  "Mine own, come back to Me!"

Still, with the Twelve around Him,
  Christ reigns upon His seat,
While cherubim and seraphim
Make music, loud and sweet.
But the soul of Red Iscariot
  Is kneeling at His Feet.

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